



IEEE 802.3 Interpretations Report 16th November 2009, Atlanta, GA

Wael William Diab
Vice-Chair, IEEE 802.3 Working Group
wdiab@broadcom.com

Interpretations Status

- 1 new interpretation request received
 - 1-11/09 – Specifications of allowable inter packet gap values in IEEE 802.3
- Details of interpretations and responses to be discussed during the week

Plans for week

- Meet Wednesday afternoon
 - Work handled as part of the Maintenance TF
 - Please note 1:00PM start
 - Review interpretation request and draft response
- Present response to closing .3 Plenary
 - Three way vote
 - Approve proposed response
 - Reject proposed response
 - Send proposed response out for WG Ballot

Interpretations Web Information

- IEEE 802.3 Maintenance web site:
<http://www.ieee802.org/3/interp/index.html>
- IEEE Standards Companion text and guidelines on interpretations:
<http://standards.ieee.org/guides/companion/part2.html#interpret>

BACKUP

Standards Companion Text

Interpretations are a unique form of commentary on the standard. They are not statements of what the standard should have done or meant to say. Interpretations cannot change the meaning of a standard as it currently stands. Even if the request points out an error in the standard, the interpretation cannot fix that error. The interpretation can suggest that this will be brought up for consideration in a revision or amendment (or, depending on the nature of the error, an errata sheet might be issued).

However, an interpretation has no authority to do any of this. It can only discuss, address, and clarify what the standard currently says. The challenge for the interpreters is to distinguish between their expertise on what "should be," their interests in what they 'would like the standard to be," and what the standard says. Interpretations are often valuable, though, because the request will point out problems that might otherwise have gone unaddressed.

Standards Companion Guidelines

- 1) The standard is what it says. If the words are substantively wrong, then a corrective corrigenda via the balloting process is the correct response.
- 2) If the standard is ambiguous, then the interpretation must favor a looser requirement rather than a more restrictive one. Again, a corrective corrigenda can be initiated if needed.
- 3) If two parts of the standard contradict one another, then a rationale should be created and the IEEE errata process should be applied to correct the contradiction.